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ABSTRACT

This paper offers many specific suggestions for improving community college reading instruction through counseling and content. Such topics are discussed as reading and writing laboratories; multimedia instruction; group instruction classes in basic reading skills, vocabulary and study skills, and analytical and critical reading; individualized instruction; training tutors to work in the labs; individual conferences; materials for reading instruction; the role of tutors; the cloze method for instructional and testing purposes; the Fernald tracing method in a beginning reading program; and oral reading. (TS)

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IMPROVING COMMUNITY COLLEGE READING INSTRUCTION THROUGH COUNSELING AND CONTENT

An address presented at the Seventh Annual California Reading Association Conference

In pondering what to discuss with you today, I decided that I would like to bring to you some of those things that other California Reading Association section speakers had provided for me in the past. I hoped I could share with you my enthusiasm for teaching reading at the Community College level, for we all need to re-experience the excitement of that first year in the classroom when we were tireless in our efforts to bring the love of learning to our students. I also hoped to bring to you some measure of inspiration, which is always a benefit of attending such a conference, for we all need to have our dreams recalled and to reflect on our aspirations when we elected to pursue this life of teaching. But most of all, I hoped to share with you some specific ideas and materials that you could take back to your schools, for this is what usually provides the means for effectualizing the enthusiasm and inspiration that is obtained from speakers such as Dan Moore and Daniel Fader. Therefore, I will concentrate on specifics.

First of all, let me tell a little about San Joaquin Delta Community College. The college is located in Stockton, California, 40 miles south of Sacramento in the fertile San Joaquin valley. We have over 7000 day students and 7000 night students

who are in the process of occupying a beautiful new cluster college campus on a tree-shaded expanse of land in the northern part of town. Most of our students come by bus or car from Stockton, Lodi, Tracy and surrounding areas. We attempt to provide them with educational experiences whereby they can discover and develop their unique potentialities.

How do we in the Reading and Writing Laboratories do that? We do two things. First, we provide a place that offers individualized, multi-media instruction based on diagnostic teaching principles. Secondly, we offer a warm human experience in the form of tutoring assistance. And these are the keys to the success of our program. But before I elaborate on these let me describe our program.

The laboratories, open five days a week from 8:30 to 2:30 and one night, are staffed by at least 2 certificated instructors per hour, one in reading and one in writing, 1 reading technician and from five to twelve tutors per hour depending on student needs.

The students enroll in the Reading Lab for 3, 6, or 9 periods per week for either 1, 2 or 3 units of credit per semester. Students select any time that is convenient for them. They may also enroll in English Lab, which is a combined individualized Writing and Reading course that offers two units of credit. This course is dependent upon performance and may be completed in two months or two years depending on the student's time and ability.

However, the course is designed to be completed in one semester.

In addition, the student may enroll in group instruction classes that meet according to a regular schedule. These classes are Basic Reading Skills, a course designed for the beginning reader; Vocabulary and Study Skills, an intermediate level course; Analytical and Critical Reading, a college level course; English as a Second Language, for immigrants and foreign students, including those who speak no English and those who may read and write well but need pronunciation and conversation or those who speak proficiently but cannot read or write satisfactorily for their purposes. (This class is taught in small groups with several instructors, technicians and tutors involved in the teaching): and Writing Lab, a course designed to offer writing lessons that complement the English as a Second Language class. Students are also free to drop in to the lab at any time for tutoring assistance on a specific writing problem or reading assignment. English 1A instructors frequently send a student to the lab with a paper that the student has been unable to complete. In the lab a tutor helps him to get his thoughts organized and on paper. He goes over the assignment eliciting responses from the student, and shows him writing patterns that facilitate organization of ideas.

The students at Delta represent a broad spectrum of backgrounds and abilities. In the lab we tend to encounter distinctive but overlapping groups: those students who are low academic achievers who gained admittance through our open door policy; adults and

parttime learners who gained access through nontraditional alternatives; ethnic minorities who were enticed and encouraged by the Educational Opportunities Services center on campus; immigrants and the foreign born; and women who are gaining admission through public conscience and Affirmative Action Programs. These students, who are new to the college scene, required us to examine the methods, materials and time and place requirement that were a part of traditional education programs. There was no reason to think that we could succeed with these students using the same methods, materials and organization that had been utilized in their prior school experiences. In ascertaining the direction and dimensions of our program, it seemed that the traditional school lacked warmth, individual instruction, flexibility and a chance to read for pleasure. We viewed these as important aspects of a learning situation that is concerned with fostering individual initiative, personal development and openness to experience. We felt that one-to-one contact would foster encouragement, reinforcement and positive regard. Therefore, we felt we would need to maintain a one-to-five tutor-pupil ratio. Student-tutors and paraprofessionals would enable us to maintain this ratio. Our tutors are paid $2 per hour out of Educational Opportunity Services funds. Our technicians are paid from college funds that were committed at the inception of our program. We also have other programs that provide volunteer tutors from the University of Pacific, our neighboring institution of higher learning.

Our tutors receive their training for working in the lab in a two unit course that provides instruction in the nature and process of reading, use of materials and media and tutoring techniques. In the group meeting held twice a week the tutors discuss reading problems, explore techniques of tutoring in reading, give demonstrations using lab materials and equipment and develop their proficiency in assisting others in learning. Each tutor selects a student as a case study. He records the progress of his case study partner over the course of the semester, and discusses his plan for assisting his partner during the class meetings. He keeps a journal recording test scores, materials used, techniques employed, gains measured and evaluations by the student and by the tutor.

In addition to the lecture session each student-tutor works at least three and up to fifteen hours per week in the lab. Only Delta undergraduates are eligible to be paid for tutoring time.

This course is taught in two sections. The afternoon session is open to teachers and University of Pacific credential candidates who enroll concurrently at UOP and Delta. We are pleased to have these highly qualified people as part of our tutoring staff, and University of Pacific is pleased to use our laboratory facility and our staff in their teacher-training program. In addition, this course satisfies one of the requirements of the Ryan Act.

Our main concern is to provide tutors who can relate to the students and identify with their learning problems. Usually the "graduates" of our Reading/Writing courses make the best tutors. English instructors and other interested instructors are always on the lookout for prospective tutors for us. Occasionally, interested instructors spend time as tutors in the lab.

Another means of providing personal, individual attention is by means of regularly scheduled conferences with every lab student at least three times per semester. This facilitates our philosophy of diagnosis as a continuing process. Initially, we do an oral diagnosis in each conference, go over test results (if a group test was administered), elicit students aims and goals, determine his "felt" needs, and mutually plan his program of lab activities.

In the second conference, we assess progress on lab programs, ask for the student's evaluation, make additional diagnoses, and plan further activities. The instructor does more listening than talking.

Near the end of the semester we schedule another half hour conference to evaluate and make recommendations for the subsequent semester. Other conferences are held intermittently according to need and desire.

If guidance is defined as "a process of helping individuals, through their own efforts, to discover and develop their potentialities for both personal and social usefulness" and since the teaching of reading is a process of helping individuals put forth their own efforts to develop their reading potentialities, then reading and guidance are inseparable.

In the Delta lab we attempt to provide the "I-thou" moments that are essential in our lives by having a daily mini-conference contact with each student. We accomplish this by keeping our attendance on the outside of the student's personal file. For every period the student spends in the lab, he obtains a signature from a technician or instructor. It is during this sign-out time at the end of each period that we establish that personal contact -- "How are you today? Did you get all the tutor assistance you needed? See you tomorrow," -- In that way, he has been acknowledge as a person and as a learner. He knows we are aware as to what and how he is doing. and that we CARE about him and his progress. He also knows we are looking forward to his next visit, and we'll be disappointed if he doesn't come. It's the affective domain that we are centering on here.

But we do not lose sight of the cognitive domain -- for to provide empathy and concern is not enough. Our task, indeed our joy, is to provide him with the materials he needs at the appropriate level to ensure successful progress and the assistance and reassurance necessary for mastery of a skill or a process.

But how can we meet this diversity of needs when we have such a range of abilities and interests? We have purchased equipment such as Language Masters, Controlled Readers, & tape recorders with which a wide range of levels of materials can be used. We rely on teacher-made materials that can be coordinated with class texts and lessons. But, primarily, we have attempted to coordinate all lab materials with specific skills so as to provide a progression of activities in specific skills areas. For example, in our Basic Reading Skills course, we use a program which capitalizes on a spelling patterns approach and incorporates dictation and oral patterning exercises. A student is ready for this course when he knows the alphabet, when he can discriminate sounds and the symbols that represent the sounds and when he knows about fifty sight words. This instruction is provided in the lab using Language Master alphabet cards and noun cards, Target Red cassettes and worksheets, Dolch cards and other materials. We have found the Patterns for Reading[1] materials (textbook and flashcards) outstanding for use in this course. A consistent phonemic-graphemic relationship throughout each step in Patterns for Reading equips the student to read and write successfully all the exercises at each level. In the basic course every student receives a coordinated lab assignment sheet that lists at least 6 lab activities that provide practice

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[1]Marsha Fabian and Mary Rhodes Hoover, Patterns for Reading. Belmont, California: Wadworth Publishing Co., Inc. 1972.

in the skill taught in class each period. Portions of the Field Targets Yellow, Blue and Orange,[2] Reading Through Listening,[3] Directional Phonics,[4] SRA IIIa Spelling Kit,[5] Scott Foresman Tactics I[6] and Wollensak Teaching Tapes[7] are some of the materials that we have coordinated with this program with exciting results.

Another method which we have found particularly useful in beginning reading is the Neurological Impress method[8] of simultaneous reading (a kind of "back-to-the-lap" method) where the tutor reads orally along with the student. This method is used effectively with adult readers as soon as they are able to analyze words independently fairly well. It also works well with students for whom English is a second language.

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[2]Midori Hiyama, James McGovern and Henry Bamman, Target Blue, Target Yellow and Target Orange. Field Ed. Pub., Inc., 1970-73.

[3]Royce Adams, Reading Through Listening. Encino, California, Dickerson Publishing Company, Inc., 1972.

[4]Erwin Pearlman and Ralph Pearlman, Directional Phonics. Teaching Technology Corporation, 1971.

[5]Don Parker amd Frederic Walker, Spelling Word Power Laboratory IIIa. Chicago: Science Research Associates, Inc., 1964.

[6]Olive Hiles and others, Tactics in Reading I. Glenview, Illinois: Scott Foresman and Company, 1965.

[7]Wollensak Teaching Tapes. St. Paul, 3M Company.

[8]R. G. Heckelman, Ph.D., "Using the Neurological Impress Remedial Technique," Academic Therapy. Vol. 1, no. 4. San Raphael, California: DeWitt Reading Clinic. Summer 1966.

The tutor is the dominant voice but he sets the pace according to the student's ability. He reads with expression in order to serve as a model for the student. The level of difficulty of materials is gradually increased, and the reading experience covers several levels of difficulty within a period of a few weeks. It is not unusual for a student to jump 5 or 6 "grade" levels in reading materials within a month. This doesn't always mean he can function independently at this level, but he can read and comprehend with assistance at this level.

The Fernauld tracing method[9] is particularly useful in our beginning reading program with our students who have learning disabilities. We use this method in class occasionally, but usually it is done in the lab. To impress on the students the value of the method, which they sometimes question with a laugh, we show them how a student can perceive a word that is traced on his back without seeing or hearing the word. We also tell them about the new equipment that enables the blind to perceive. A TV camera that is focused on an object or arrangement has electrical connections attached to the back of the blind individual. The image is transmitted in this means to the mind. Then we discuss the fullest development and use of all our senses and learning modalities.

The cloze method[10] for instructional and testing purposes has proven useful and fun at all levels. We select interesting short stories or poems and begin by deleting every tenth word, every

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Grace Fernauld, Remedial Techniques in the Basic School Subjects. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1943, p. 113.

Thaddeus Trela, Fourteen Remedial Reading Methods. Belmont, California: Lear Sigler, Inc./Fearon Publishers, 1967, p. 36.

seventh word, every fifth word and ultimately every third word in our selections. The students fill in the missing words at home or in the lab. They bring their papers to the class or the group. Then we form groups of three or four students who mutually agree on one word for each blank. You should hear the debates over the choice of words -- "Hey, no way, man, that's got to be an it there. A unicorn ain't no he or she. It's an it. See back here where he says its." Or "It's got to be the psychiatrist -- not 'then the policeman' because there isn't a comma. Also he said it that way earlier, and look how often he repeats himself." You can see we've gotten into parts of speech, punctuation, style, organization and comprehension. And, of course, vocabulary development is inherent in this method. Ultimately the small groups came together to compare versions, and we take a look at what Thurber wrote. The students are amazed that they selected words that an author selected. Successful writing seems like a more realistic goal.

Oral reading of phonetic patterns is a feature of our beginning reading program. We do it in groups led by tutors and teachers to enable the students to experience the sound of short A as they repeat it while perceiving the visual stimulus of the word.

Intermix[11] is another method we find beneficial and fun. We use it for reinforcing and reviewing skills or even for demonstrations and explanations of mateials and equipment. Students

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David Capuzzi, "The Intermix Technique for Developing Study Skills" in Reading: Putting All the Cards on the Table, Proceedings of the Fifth Annual Conference of the Western College Reading Association. Reno: 1972, p. 14-20.

are divided into groups. One group leader comes into the lab and learns how to use a kit or machine program. Then he introduces it to his group in class. Each member of his group goes to one of the other group and teaches that group how to use the materials or one skill to convey to the rest of the group.

We also use this method for getting classes acquainted with one another. We also have a laboratory beginning reading program that combines instruction with technology for those students who are unable to attend a class or special small group.

Too often we have seen labs with all kinds of machinery and materials that the student selects without a fixed purpose based on diagnosis of his needs. These programs may touch on the skill area of his weakness but do not provide sequential development spanning the learning of the skill at a basic level to the mastering and utilization of the skill at a mature level. Students often cover several so-called grade levels of skill development in one area within a few lab periods. Many times adult students can learn a skill and move to utilizing it at a sophisticated level without the repeated teaching and practice used in the earlier grades. Our goal is to provide 1) instruction in classes, small groups or individually (keeping in mind we are individualizing instruction anytime we are meeting needs whether we are meeting the needs of thirty or five or one at a time),

to provide 2) practice -- that's where technology assists us, and to provide opportunities for and encouragemeı of 3) application of skills to academic courses. Individualized programs free the teacher for instruction and guidanceand allow the student the control over his academic destiny. He can repeat a lesson to the point of satisfaction without fear of embarrassment in the privacy of his learning carrel. In operating the recorder or projector, he feels responsibility for his own learning. Our three-fold emphasis of instruction, practice and application is designed to create independence in the learner and to use reading instruction as a springboard for improvement in course work.

In order to offer the flexibility needed by the diverse students who seek our assistance,, we allow students to select their hours in the Reading Lab according to their own schedules. A student may elect to come at 1:30 on Monday, 9:30 on Wednesday and 10:30 on Friday. He selects the time that is convenient for him, and we schedule him at that time. We schedule him because we feel it is important for him to be expected at a specific time. But he is also free to decide not to come at that time if he doesn't feel like reading at 9:30 on a particular Monday. He then makes up the missed hour at another time that is convenient for him.

We offer further flexibility in our English Lab course,, which is a combined Reading and Writing course. The student develops a knowledge of a rhetorical pattern by encountering it

in various Reading Lab assignments (tapes, worksheets and books), then he writes his paper on comparison-contrast, persuasion or description. He has nine Reading Lab preparatory assignments before writing the papers. The student is free to write the papers in the lab or at home. When he is ready he brings his paper to the lab to have it checked by a tutor or instructor; the tutor goes over the paper with him immediately, so there is instruction and assistance immediately available.

In closing I would like to encourage each of you to take your clue from the local newstand with its proliferation of sensuous novels. We have seen The Sensuous Woman, The Sensuous Man, the Sensuous Hooker, and a friend of mine recently had his book published entitled The Sensuous Christian. And now, I'm asking for the sensuous teacher. Too much, you say. Not really. Not if enjoyment is the goal of our reading program. Not if we truly believe in releasing human potential. Not if we care.

When we reflect on our educational experience, it is usually not what we learned or even how we learned that calls forth a feeling of warmth, rather it is whom we encountered that made a difference in our lives that provides the pleasant association with learning. It wasn't so much Math that we disliked and English that we loved. It was the Math teacher who made us feel stupid or didn't really know us and the English teacher who made us feel he cared about his subject and about each student. He was senuous -- he found joy in his life's work and he transmitted this joy into

an openness and a receptiveness that enabled him to share his love of life into a love of people. It's an old message, this sharing of love, this reaching out to others -- but it seems to be worthy of nurturing. -- At Delta we feel it is so. We hope you do also.

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